Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 207971

EXDIS

FOL REPEAT PRETORIA 4458 ACTION SECSTATE INFO BONN DAR ES SALAAM GABORONE LAGOS LONDON LUSAKA MAPUTO OTTAWA PARIS DTD AUG 29.

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 4458

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS
TAGS: PDEV RH UK US SF
SUBJ: RHODESIA: OWEN-YOUNG TALKS WITH SAG

REF: PRETORIA 4454

1. OWEN AND YOUNG, ACCOMPANIED BY THEIR RESPECTIVE TEAMS, MET THIS MORNING (AUG 29) WITH PRIME MINISTER VORSTER, FONMIN BOTHA, SCRETARY OF DFA BRAND FOURIE, CONFIDENTIAL

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SOUTH AFRICAN AMBASSADOR TO RHODESIA OLIVIER, DFA COUNSELOR NEAL VAN HEERDEN, AND HEAD OF DFA PRESS DEPARTMENT NEVILE KRIGE. THE MEETING LASTER FROM 9:00 A.M. UNTIL 12:30 P.M., WHEN IT WAS ADJOURNED UNTIL 5:30. SUMMARY OF THIS SESSION WAS CONTAINED IN REFTEL.

2. BOTHA BEGAN THE SESSION BY SUMMARIZING HIS UNDERSTANDING OF THE SALIENT FEATURES OF THE PROPOSALS WHICH WERE PUT TO HIM IN LONDON, AND WHICH HE SAID HE HAD EXPLAINED TO IAN SMITH. RESPONDING, OWEN CLARIFIED

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SEVERAL POINTS, INCLUDING THE FACT THAT THE SOUTH AFRICANS' UNDERSTANDING THAT BILL OF RIGHTS AND OTHER ENTRENCHED CLAUSES OF THE CONSTITUTION COULD NOT BE AMENDED FOR A MINIMUM OF EIGHT YEARS WAS INCORRECT; THE AMENDING PROCEDURE PROVIDES THAT CERTAIN ELEMENTS OF THE CONSTITUTION COULD NOT BE AMENDED FOR WHAT WOULD AMOUNT TO ABOUT FIVE YEARS. AND RHODESIAN ARMY WOULD NOT, AS BOTHA HAD SAID, BE KEPT INTACT. WE HAD AGREED IN LONDON THAT CERTAIN ELEMENTS OF THE ARMY WOULD HAVE TO GO.

3. AS HE HAD DONE WITH THE FRONTLINE AND THE PATRIOTIC FRONT, OWEN FOCUSED ON THE LAW AND ORDER SITUATION AS THE BASIC PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED. HE STRESSED THAT RHODESIANS HAD TWO OPTIONS--AN INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION OR AN INTERNAL SOLUTION. IF THE LATTER WERE CHOSEN, THE WAR WOULD CONTINUE, PRESSURE WOULD BE PLACED ON OUR THREE GOVERNMENTS, AND SOUTHERN AFRICA WOULD BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED. AN AGREEMENT ON THE TRANSITION PERIOD WAS THE KEY TO AN INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION. THE RHODESIAN ARMY COULD NOT BE DISMANTLED, BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, A NEW ZIMBABWE ARMY HAD TO BE BASED ON THE LIBERATION FORCES. THE FRONT-
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LIN PRESIDENTS HAD AGREED TO THE RETENTION OF SOME ELEMENTS OF THE RHODESIAN FORCES. IT WAS ABSOLUTELY IMPERATIVE IN THEIR EYES THAT THE ENTIRE STRUCTURE OF PRESENT ARMY NOT BE KEPT INTACT AND THAT THE NEW ARMY BE BASED ON THE LIBERATION FORCES. OTHEREWISE, THERE COULD BE NO SETTLEMENT. OWEN WENT ON AT SOME LENGTH (FOR OVER AN HOUR) TO EXPLAIN HOW THE FOUR PARTIES WOULD NEGOTATITE THE DETAILS OF THE STATUS OF MILITARY FORCES DURING THE TRANSITION, THE ROLE OF THE UN, AND THE REACTION OF THE FRONTLINE AND THE PATRIOTIC FRONT TO THESE CRUCIAL ASPECTS OF A SETTLEMENT.

4. VORSTER THEN ASKED A SERIES OF QUESTIONS TO WHICH OWEN AND YOUNG RESPONDED. FIRST, HE WANTED TO KNOW THAT IF EITHER MUZOREWA OR SITHOLE WON THE ELECTION, WHAT GUARANTEE DID WE HAVE THAT NKOMO AND MUGABE WOULD ABIDE BY THE RESULTS. OWEN SAID THERE WAS NO ABSOLUTE GUARANTEE, BUT THAT A COMBINATION OF AN AGREED SETTLE-MENT, UN INVOLVEMENT AND FRONTLINE BACKING--AND THE LATTER'S STRONG DESIRE FOR PEACE IN THE AREA--WOULD PLACE STRONG PRESSURE ON ALL TO ACCEPT THE ELECTION RESULTS. AMB YOUNG UNDERLINED THE NEED FOR AN INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION BY POINTING OUT THAT THE CONTINUANCE OF CHAOS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, AND THE POSSIBILITY OF TURMOIL SPREADING FROM THE HORN ADE A PEACEFUL RHODESIA ESSENTIAL TO THE POLITICAL AND DCONOMIC STABILITY OF THE COUNTRIES IN BETWEEN.

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THUS AT THIS MOMENT, ALTHOUGH THERE CONTINUES TO BE DIS-
AGREEMENT REGARDING A SOLUTION, THERE ARE MORE GROUNDS
FOR AGREEMENT THAN EVER BEFORE.

5. VORSTER STATED THAT WHAT OWEN AND YOUNG HAD SAID
WAS ONLY AN ASSUMPTION. DID WE HAVE ASSURANCES FROM
MUGABE AND NKOMO THAT THEY WOULD ACCEPT THE ELECTION
RESULTS? OWEN RESPONDED THAT WE DID, AND YOUNG REPEATED
THAT THE FRONTLINE HAD STATED THEIR FIRM BACKING FOR
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FREE ELECTIONS. VORSTER WAS STILL NOT SATISFIED ON
THIS POINT AND ASKED WHETHER A NEW GOVT FORMED BY
MAZOREWA OR SITHOLE WOULD BE UPHELD BY UK AND US. HE
WENT ON TO SAY THAT, IF THE RHODESIAN GOVT WENT
INTO ELECTIONS, IT WOULD ACCEPT THE RESULTS, AND SOUTH
AFRICA WOULD SEE THAT "THEY WOULD CARRY OUT THEIR COMMIT-
MENT". HOWEVER, "THIS AGREEMENT IS LACKING ON
THE OTHER SIDE". YOUNG AND OWEN MADE THE POINT THAT,
ALTHOUGH NO GUARANTEE COULD BE GIVEN, WE COULD MAKE
IT CLEAR TO THE NATIONALISTS THAT IF THEY RENEGED ON
A DEMOCRATIC PROCESS, BENEFIRTS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
EVEN BEYOND THOSE OF THE ZIMBABWE DEVELOPMENT FUND,
WOULD NOT BE AVAILABLE TO THEM FROM THE WEST. NO
BRITISH OR AMERICAN TROOPS WOULD BE PUT INTO THE AREA
BUT, WITH AN INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION, WE
WOULD BE MORALLY OBLIGATED TO DO ALL WE COULD TO SEE
THAT IT WORKED.

6. VORSTER THEN ASKED WHETHER SANCTONS WOULD BE LIFTED
WITH THE INSTALLATION OF A RESIDENT COMMISSIONER, AND
WHETHER THIS WOULD HAVE TO BE DONE BY A UN SECURITY
COUNCIL RESOLUTION. MCHENRY INFORMED HIM THAT SANCTIONS
WOULD BE LIFTED, BUT THAT A SC RESOLUTION WOULD NOT
BE NECESSARY. WITH ENOUGH CONSENSUS IN THE SECURITY
COUNCIL, THERE WOULD BE ACCEPTANCE OF A STATEMENT BY
THE UK THAT THE REBELLION WAS ENDED AND THE NEED FOR
SANCTIONS NO LONGER EXISTED.

7. VORSTER AND BOTHA EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT "DIS-
MANTLING OF THE RHODESIAN FORCES". WHAT DID WE MEAN
WHEN WE SAID "ELEMENTS" OF THE RHODESIAN ARMY WOULD
HAVE TO GO?" WHAT GUARANTEES COULD WE GIVE THAT THE
ENTIRE ARMY "WON'T BE DISMISSED TOMORROW IN THE TRANSI-
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TION PERIOD?" OWEN SAID THE BEST GURANANTEE WE COULD
GIVE WAS THAT NEITHER HE NOR THE RESIDENT COMMISSIONER
DESIGNATE WOULD ACCEPT A SITUATION WHICH THEY COULD NOT
LIVE WITH. DETAILS OF WHAT ELEMENTS OF THE RHODESIAN

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ARMY WOULD BE RETAINED WOULD HAVE TO BE WORKED OUT IN
THE NEGOTIATIONS BEFORE THE TRANSITION PERIOD. BOTH
SIDES WOULD HAVE TO BELIEVE THERE WAS A BASIS FOR A
CEASEFIRE AND, AGAIN, AGREEMENT BY BOTH SIDES HINGED
ON RETENTION OF THE CORE OF THE RHODESIAN ARMY AND
ACCEPTANCE THAT THE NEW ZIMBABWE NATIONAL ARMY WOULD
BE BASED ON LIBERATION FORCES.

8. VORSTER WANTED TO KNOW THAT THE ROLE OF THE UN
FORCES WOULD BE. OWEN AND YOUNG SPELLED THIS OUT IN
SOME DETAIL. FOLLOWING THIS, VORSTER POSED A SERIES
OF QUESTIONS CONCERNING HOW WHITES' FEARS COULD BE
RELIEVED REGARDING LAW AND ORDER DURING AND AFTER THE
TRANSITION. HE EMPHASIZED THEY WOULD HAVE TO BE SATISFIED
ABOUT THE STATUS OF THE RHODESIAN ARMY. OWEN REPLIED
THAT HE HAD TO SATISFY NOT ONLY THE WHITE RHODESIANS
BUT ALSO THE NATIONALISTS AND FRONTLINE. WE COULD NOT
FULLY SATISFY THE WHITES ON THE LAW AND ORDER ISSUE
BUT, AS HE HAD NOTED BEFORE, THE BRITISH GOVT
WOULD NOT INSTALL A RESIDENT COMMISSIONER UNLESS THE
LAW AND ORDER QUESTION WAS SATISFACTORILY ANSWERED
BEFORE THE TRANSITION. AS FOR THE RHODESIAN ARMY, IF
TH UK AND US STATED PUBLICLY THAT WE WOULD NOT DIS-
MANTLE THE RHODESIAN FORCE, THERE WOULD BE NO CHANCE
OF AFRICAN ACCEPTANCE OF A SETTLEMENT. EQUALLY, A SETTLEMENT
WOULD BE UNOBTAINABLE IF WE SAID WE WOULD DISMANTLE
THE RHODESIAN FORCES. HE REMINDED VORSTER
THAT THE AFRICANS HAD ACCEPTED THE PRESENCE OF ELEMENTS
THE SMITH ARMY DURING THE TRANSITION--THAT THIS WOULD
BE PART OF THE BASIS FOR FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS. HOWEVER,
THE MORE WE DISCUSSED THIS IN PUBLIC, THE MORE DIFFICULT
IT WOULD BE TO GET AGREEMENT.
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9. VORSTER ASKED ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS ABOUT THE TRANSI-
TION PERIOD, INCLUDING WHETHER MUZOREWA OR SITHOLE
WOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE NEOGTIATIONS AMONG THE RESIDENT
COMMISSIONER, UN REP AND MILITARY COMMANDERS.
THE RESPONSE WAS THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE, FOR THEY DO NOT
HAVE ANY FORMED FORCES AT THEIR DISPOSAL. HOWEVER, THE
RESIDENT COMMISSIONER WOULD BE REPRESENTING THE
INTERESTS OF ALL THE PEOPLE OF ZIMBABWE.

10. BOTHA EXPRESSED PARTICULAR CONCERN ABOUT THE
FEASIBILITY OF TRAINING THE ZIMBABWE ARMY DURING THE
TRANSITION. HE SAID HE WOULD NOT SEE HOW THIS COULD
BE DONE DURING AN ELECTION CAMPAIGN, FOR THE VARIOUS
CANDIDATES WOULD BE TRYING TO GAIN THE LOYALTY OF THE
MILITARY. OWEN ADMITTED THAT THIS WOULD BE A PROBLEM,
BUT NOTED THAT THE FORCES WOULD BE UNDER UN SUPERVISION
AND THAT LAW AND ORDER WOULD BE MAINTAINED BY THE POLICE.
MOREOVER, THE RESIDENT COMMISSIONER WOULD USE HIS FULL

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AUTHORITY TO ENSURE THAT THERE WAS NO INTIMIDATION
DURING THE ELECTORAL PROCESS. FURTHER, THE MODALITIES
OF THE TRAINING WOULD BE SUBJECT TO NEGOTIATIONS BY
THE RESIDENT COMMISSIONER AND THE OTHERS.

11. VORSTER VOICED ADDITIONAL CONCERNS ABOUT THE STATUS
OF BOTH THE RHODESIAN MILITARY ELEMENTS AND THE
LIBERATION FORCES DURING THE TRANSITION. HE SAID IT
WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN THIS TO SMITH, ESPECIALLY
SINCE WE HAD ADDED A NEW PARAGRAPH (11E) THE THE PROPOSAL.
OWEN MAINTAINED THAT IF AN AGREEMENT CENTERS ON WHETHER
OR NOT THE RHODESIAN ARMED FORCES WILL BE DISMANTLED,
WE WOULD GET NOWHERE. HE SAID HE HAD MADE IT CLEAR TO
THE FRONTLINE AND PATRIOTIC FRONT THAT THE RHODESIAN
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FORCES WOULD NOT BE DISMANTLED. YOUNG POINTED OUT
THAT THE PARTIES WE HAVE SEEN HAVE TALKED REASONABLY
IN PRIVATE, OIT EACH HAS ITS PARTICULAR CONSITITUENCY
AND MUST SPEAK IN PUBLIC ACCORDINGLY. IT WAS FOR THAT
REASON THAT, FOR EXAMPLE, NYERERE HAD MADE HIS STATEMENT
THAT THE SMITH ARMY WOULD BE DISMANTLED. OWEN EMPHASIZED
ONCE AGAIN THAT IF WE WERE TOO SPECIFIC PUBLICLY ON
THIS ISSUE, THERE WOULD BE NO AGREEMENT.

12. NEAR THE CONCLUSION OF THE SESSION, YOUNG STATED
THAT WE HAVE THE ELEMENTS OF A SETTLEMENT THAT COULD
BRING PEACE TO A ZIMBABWE THAT WOULD RELATE TO THE WEST
AND ALSO TO SOUTH AFRICA. THIS WOULD BE POSSIBLE ONLY
IF WE WORKED TOGETHER. IF WE CULD NOT, THE CONSEQUENCES
WOULD BE GRIM. NO ONE HAD BEEN ASKED TO MAKE A MAJOR
COMMITMENT. THE PATRIOTIC FRONT HAD BEEN ASKED ONLY
TO DISCUSS TRANSITION ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE RESIDENT
COMMISSIONER AND OTHERS. WE HAD ASKED THE FRONTLINE FOR
THEIR GENERAL SUPPORT AND FOR THEIR BACKING IN THE UN.
AS WE NEEDED THEIR SUPPORT REGARDING THE PATRIOTIC
FRONT, WE NEEDED SUPPORT FROM SOUTH AFRICA REGARDING THE
RHODESIANS.

13. VORSTER RESPONDED THAT SOUTH AFRICA HAD ALWAYS
STATED IT PREFERRED A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT. HOWEVER,
IT WAS THE JOB OF THE UK AND THE US TO SELL A NEGOTIATED
SETTLEMENT TO THE RHODESIANS. WE WOULD HAVE TO CONVINCE
THE RHODESIANS THAT THE ARMY WOULD NOT GIVE WAY TO A
"TERRORIST FORCE". HE WAS UNSURE WHETHER WE COULD
DISPELL THEIR DISTRUST OF OUR MOTIVES, ESPECIALLY IN
VIEW OF THE ADDITION TO THE SECTION IN THE DOCUMENT
DEALING WITH THE TRANSITION. AT THIS POINT, VORSTER
ADJOURNED THE MEETING UNTIL 5:30 P.M.
BOWDLER

UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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